

December 2021

→ **MINISTRY UPDATE** ←

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# UPDATE

We have filed with a broker, but we still have a few problems with Profit & Loss. I'm not sure I can say that is good news, but I can't change course right now. God knows our needs.

We have about 14 men living in tents, and we have 10 more coming in the next two weeks. Tents aren't too bad when the weather isn't too cold or too hot. When it is freezing outside, remember your brethren in tents. At least we are providing showers, restrooms, and food for them. Many of the men helped the other men who needed friendship at Thanksgiving. We truly do function as a family. Many of our men are mentally challenged.

From now until January is a very serious time of year for those with mental illness. Broken families are the norm nowadays, and this comes with an extremely high cost in both dollars and human life. Please pray that the Holy Spirit can reach the heart of those deceived about the results of sin. We know Jesus is the answer if they are able to see Him.



We want to wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, but please remember those in the prison system. The

penalty doesn't stop when they are released. That is when the tough times begin.

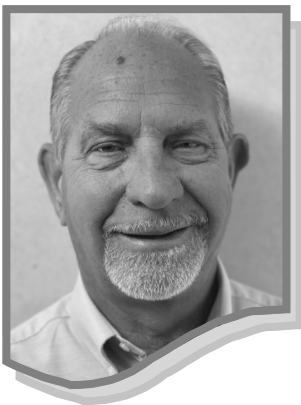
— David Nichols,  
President & CEO

Last month, I introduced you to Joseph Costa, our Office Manager and Park Manager at 59th Street. This month, I want to introduce you another staff member. I failed to make this introduction when he returned to Hand Up, so I would like to make up for this now. I am speaking of Joe King, who currently serves as comptroller for all of Hand Up Ministries. Joe was with Hand Up a number of years ago, back when Hand Up was on Broadway Drive in downtown OKC. He served Hand Up in various capacities back then, one of which was taking care of the finances for Hand Up. Joe faithfully served for a few years, and then he returned to Alabama.

Joe came back to Hand Up in 2020. He is 63 years old, and he is retired on Social Security. Joe had experience as an electrician, and he served Hand Up as a volunteer helping us get a few things rewired and corrected. David Nichols asked him to help us part time with maintenance issues, and he faithfully served to help when and where we needed him. When we lost a valuable staff member, Joe gracefully stepped up and took over those responsibilities. He helped correct some mistakes, and he improved relationships with prison case managers and the people who work in the registration office. Joe shaped up the office staff, and he helped us discover issues in our system.

When James Womack retired, Joe

reluctantly agreed to take on the jobs of new resident intake and maintaining our financial records. Joe has been a valuable asset to Hand Up over the years, and he currently serves as comptroller. He has our finances in good shape. We eventually hired another person to help with intake, and now Joe just keeps the books. He also serves as a valued advisor to me and to David Nichols. He is a forward thinker, and he doesn't need to be told what needs to be done. Joe King came back to Hand Up at the perfect time to serve this ministry at a weak point and help us in many ways.



Hand Up Ministries is better off today due to Joe King and his service to Hand Up Ministry.

— Ray Riddle,  
Oklahoma Director

## TESTIMONIES

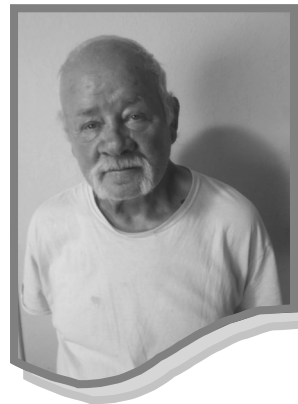
In was born Sugarland, Texas in 1956. I was the middle child of five siblings. My dad worked for the county, and my mom worked for a large company. My parents got divorced in 1968, and my mom moved us to Ada, Oklahoma. My mom met my step-dad there. My step-dad and I didn't see eye to eye. We attended a Baptist church. My step-dad wanted us to go to church, and the only reason I went to church was keep peace in the family. I graduated from high school in Ada, and I returned to Texas to go to welding school.

I got job Tulsa in 1978. I worked in Tulsa for a year, and then I went to Alaska to work on an oil pipeline. I spent 11 months in Alaska. I wanted to stay in

Alaska, but there was no position open with that company. I returned to Ada, where I got a job with a company which made grave monuments. I worked there for 36 years. We helped build the Murrah bombing memorial in Oklahoma City.

I got married in 1978, and I have three daughters and 11 grandchildren. My first wife died in 1989. I thought there was no reason to live, but I met a man who encouraged me to continue living. I remarried in 1996 or 1997. We were married for ten years. I committed a crime in 2004, and I spent 17 years in prison. I started attending church in prison, and I was baptized in Church of Christ in 2015. I got out of prison in 2021, and I came to Hand Up Ministries.

I got a job in July, 2021, and I have been at that same job for four months. There is more to do than sit around the house. I have found a good church, which I attend on Sunday morning, and I like the church service at Hand Up on Sunday night. If any brothers here want me to pray for them or help them, I am glad do that.



I have made many good friends at Hand Up, and Hand Up has given me a chance and made a big difference in my life..

— John Anderson

I was born in 1977 in Tehachapi, California. I have a younger sister and a younger brother. I had a good childhood, and I was close to my grandmother. I would go to her house and play dominoes. I was into BMX bikes, and I got into dirt track racing when I was in my teens. My uncle raced a dirt track car, and I was part of his pit crew when I was in high school. We moved to Oklahoma in 1994. My parents bought a 400 acre farm near Eufala. We raised cattle, and I became a cowboy. I met my wife there. We were neighbors.

We dated till 1996, and we got married in September of that year. We moved to Warner, Oklahoma, and we had our first child in 1997. I worked for her uncle at Allied Van Lines. I drove a truck. I started using meth when one of my boss' employees offered meth to me, and I

failed a random drug test at a weigh station. I lost my job, and I went to rehab for 30 days. My wife was pregnant with our second child, and the baby was born in 2000. I got a job at Wal-Mart. I started out changing oil, but I was promoted to shift manager in the automotive department.

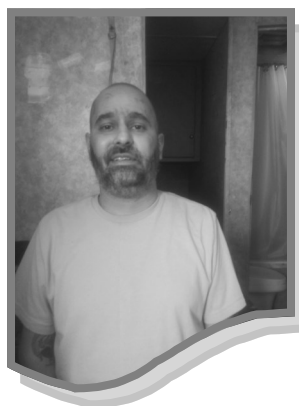
My wife had twins in 2002. I was embezzling merchandise from Wal-Mart to get stuff I could use to cook meth. In 2003, I was arrested for embezzlement, drug possession, false declaration, and having a firearm. My wife and I got divorced. I spent three months in jail, and I was given a five year deferred sentence. I went wild after I got out jail, and I lived with drug addicts who let me cook dope in their shed. I went to Austin, Texas in 2005. I met a woman in Texas. She used meth, and I moved in with her and her kids. My mom passed away in 2006. I went to Checotah, but I missed her funeral. My sister and I went to Austin to bring my girlfriend and her kids to Oklahoma, and I started working for a sanitation company.

I got my own place two months after we brought my girlfriend and her kids to Checotah. I got back on dope after about six months, and I started shooting meth. I had smoked meth before that time. I got hooked on meth in 2006. I shot meth every day for a year. I arrested at work in 2007. I was accused of touching the breast of my girlfriend's daughter. I had told my girlfriend to move out. I was sentenced to ten years in prison, and I spent seven and a half years in prison.

My family welcomed me back after I got out of prison, and I stayed with my sister. I started working for the sanitation company again, and my boss rented a trailer to me. I got back together with my wife, and I started working for her uncle again. I met the Lord during this time. My wife had become a Christian. I had my family back, and I was doing well, but I started using dope again in 2017. My wife found my meth four months later, and she kicked me out of the house. My boss gave me a drug test, and I failed. He fired me.

I went wild. I was doing meth and committing robberies. I was charged with second degree rape in 2018, and I was in prison till April, 2021. I came to Hand Up. I have been clean since 2018. I gave my life to

the Lord when I was in jail in 2018. I realized I had lost everything, and I knew I had to dedicate my life to the Lord. Hand Up has helped me spiritually. I got COVID-19 in August, 2021. I went to the hospital, and I was in a coma for over ten days. After I got out of the coma, I woke up one night and had a vision in which the Lord told me he wasn't done with me. I got out the hospital in October, 2021. I am home, and Hand Up has helped me find assistance with program fees. I am on oxygen, and I lost so much muscle mass I can't walk.



Men here are helping me with my daily needs, and I am slowly getting better.

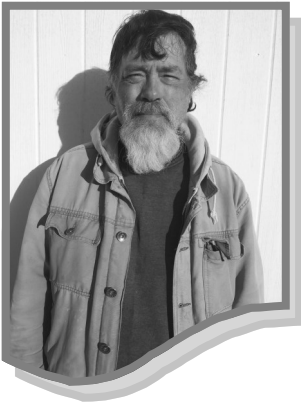
— Chris Ross

I was severely abused by my mother when I was a child. She beat me with various objects, and she almost killed me with a toilet plunger when I was nine years old. I didn't have many friends, and I wasn't allowed to date when I was a teenager. I was allowed to work, but the money either went into her pocket or was used to buy my school clothes. My adult life was rough. I was married for nine years, and my wife and I had three daughters. She cheated on me, so I didn't know if the girls were mine. My wife and I eventually divorced. I knew of God when I was growing up, but I didn't give myself to Christ until just before I went to jail in Oregon in 2003. This was the first time I went to prison. I studied the Bible in prison. Later, I left the grace of God for many years, and I didn't return to the Lord until I met my last wife.

God was giving me advice, but I started following myself again. I stayed clean and sober for 23 years, but I started drinking and doing drugs again. I moved to Oklahoma. My wife betrayed me in 2020, and I went to prison after that. I learned about Hand Up Ministries from a case worker in prison. I applied to Hand Up, and I was

accepted.

My life now is awesome. Hand Up has given me a place to live and a second chance. God has shown me love and forgiveness, and I never want to turn my back on Him again.



Men here are helping me with my daily needs, and I am slowly getting better.

— Donald Young

I was born in Oklahoma City in 1957. I was the third of nine kids. My dad worked at the Dayton tire plant. My parents divorced when I was young, and I lived with my dad after the divorce. I lived with my mom at a later time. I went to a Baptist church with my grandmother, and I played on their softball team. I was always getting into trouble when I was in school, and I got into fights. I played football in junior high school, but I dropped out of school in seventh grade. I went to work for my brother-in-law's brother after I quit school. He was a tree trimmer, and trimming trees is the only job I have ever had.

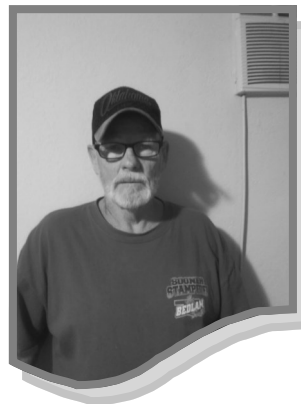
I was a trouble maker when I was a teenager. I drank and engaged in petty theft. I hung out in bars when I was in my twenties. I picked up girls, but I never got married. My friends and I would steal lumber from lumber yards, and I went to prison for theft when I was 18. I spent one year in prison. My mom moved to California when I was 22, and I moved with her. I met a woman in California when I was 28. She had three kids, and we moved in together. I stopped using drugs when I began living with her, and I stayed off drugs for nine years. We moved to Chicago, and I went into tree trimming business with a man who turned out to be a drug dealer. I got strung out on drugs, and I left the woman and returned to Oklahoma.

I was still using drugs after I returned to Oklahoma, and I went to prison for second degree burglary. I was in prison for three years. I didn't get into trouble for a few years, but I eventually went back to prison for

burglary again. I did another three years in prison. I got out and did tree work until I went back to prison for burglary. I served four years in prison that time. I was still doing drugs, and I was arrested for first degree robbery. I was sentenced to 40 years, but only served 27 years.

I went to Kingston, Oklahoma to run off some people who were at my granddaughter's house. I was falsely accused of a sex crime, and I spent four years in prison. I came to Hand Up in March, 2019 after I got out of prison. I stay out of trouble now. I quit drugs and drinking. I have had three heart attacks since I came to Hand Up. Doctors put two stints in my heart. My heart almost stopped after that, and I spent five days in the hospital. I had gone to the hospital for a COVID test, and they told me my heart was about to stop.

I am a different person now, and my family has noticed that I have changed for the better.



I asked God into life, and I don't want to do the things I used to do. The Hand Up church service and the Genesis One meetings have helped me to change for the better.

— Tommy Coddington

**We appreciate all our partners and donors. It is your support that enables us to assist individuals back into society as new brothers and sisters in Christ.**

